

“Single Married Divorced or Widowed,” Part 7 - 1 Corinthians 7:18-24 – February 22nd, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part seven of a series I've titled, "Single Married Divorced or Widowed."
 - The Apostle Paul has been answering questions asked of him by the Corinthians regarding marriage, intimacy in marriage, etc.
 - Questions like should we stay married now that we're Christians, or, should I divorce my husband or wife who's not a Christian.
- It's important to understand that the Corinthians didn't have anyone who modeled the Christian life for them as new believers.
 - This is why they send Paul a letter listing all of their questions, which are about what they should do now that they're saved.
 - More specifically, now that I'm saved, am I to have nothing to do with my old life before Christ and should I quit my secular job?

7. What should I do now that I'm saved (Verses 18-24)

- v18-20 Paul says each person should remain in the situation they were in at the time they were saved whether Jew or Gentile.
 - v21-24 He then says each person should also remain in the situation they were in when they were saved whether slave or free.
 - What Paul is saying here is they were to stay right where they were at even though they had become born again Christians.
- This is a textbook case of needing to know the why behind the what. Why they ask this, and why does Paul answer this way?
 - First, as it relates to why they are asking about this. I believe it was because the genuinely wanted to do right in God's site.
 - Second, as it relates to why Paul answers in this way; I believe it was because they were in the best position to reach the lost.
- If we as Christians were to completely cut ourselves off and turn our backs on the old life, who will be left there to reach the lost.
 - In other words, if someone was a Jew when they were saved, they should stay in that situation in order to reach the other Jews.
 - Or, if someone was a slave of whom there were many they were in the best position to reach their fellow slaves with the gospel.
- I suppose you could say that Paul is telling them to bloom where they're planted and just be who God has called them to be.
 - However, let me hasten to say there's an exception to this rule of not turning our backs on that, which represents the old life.
 - Namely, if it endangers threatens or becomes a hindrance and a distraction to us, then we should seek to change it if we can.

G. Campbell Morgan - "...Sorrow may become a distraction. Joy may become a distraction, or commerce, or the world. Then we are to turn our back upon all these things."

- Here's the bottom line, there's something about us as Christians that wants to embrace this notion of isolation from the world.
 - While it's true that we're in the world but not of the world, how are we to be salt and light if we cut ourselves off from the world?
 - I would suggest that having this mindset leads to more problems within Christendom than anyone would care to acknowledge.
- It's been said that Christians are like manure, when they are clumped together they stink, but when spread out they will fertilize.
 - Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I share some questions I've been pondering over as of late as it relates to this.
 - One question is this, where are all the Christian teenagers? Are they in Christian schools or are there any left in public schools.
- Here's another question, where are all the Christian teachers? Are they teaching in Christian schools or in the public schools?
 - Please know I'm in no way saying God doesn't call Christian teenagers or teachers to the Christian schools. He certainly does.
 - What I am saying is that if we cut ourselves off from all the non-Christian arenas, then who prey tell will be left to reach the lost?
- I don't say this to lay a heavy guilt trip on anyone, but I have to say that I am particularly concerned for our young people today.
 - I asked my 14-year old son, who goes to a public school, if he knew of any who were strong Christians that went to his school.
 - His answer grieved me, he said that there was only one who he knew for sure was a Christian, and who wasn't ashamed of it.
- A number of years back I happened upon some young kids who were sitting around talking story, so I gave them a gospel tract.
 - At first I was a little taken back by their 4-letter words, but once I got past that I asked them some questions about Jesus Christ.
 - Their answers were surprising not so much because of what they said, but more because they were a completely blank slate.
- Again, this is not intended to heap condemnation on the body of Christ, rather, I think we would do well to consider this issue.
 - Maybe we need look no further than this whole idea of only associating with Christians to explain the reason for this problem.
 - Moreover one has to wonder what the impact would be if we as Christians stayed in those positions that God has appointed us.
- Lastly let me say that in my experience it's often times the laity that has a more powerful impact on the lost than the clergy.
 - This because, lay people establish relationships with non-Christians in secular positions that clergy like myself simply cannot.
 - I'll close with a quote from a book God used in His calling me to move to Oahu and go back into ministry by starting this church.

"The genesis of this book lay in a chance conversation in the 1960's, in the days before self-service gas stations. I had just had my car filled up ...and enjoyed a marvelously rich conversation with the pump attendant. As I turned the key and the engine ...roared to life, a thought suddenly hit me with the force of an avalanche: This man was the first person I had spoken to in a week who was not a church member. I was in danger of being drawn into a religious ghetto. Urged on all sides to see that my future must lie in the ministry, I had volunteered to work in a well-known church for nine months and was miserable. To be fair, I admired the pastor ...But it just wasn't me. My passion was to relate my faith to the exciting and exploding secular world of early 1960's Europe, ...Ten minutes of conversation with a friendly gas pump attendant on a beautiful spring evening ...and I knew once and for all that I was not cut out to be a minister. Needless to say, recognizing who we aren't is only the first step toward knowing who we are." (Os Guinness, "The Call" p.p. 5,6)